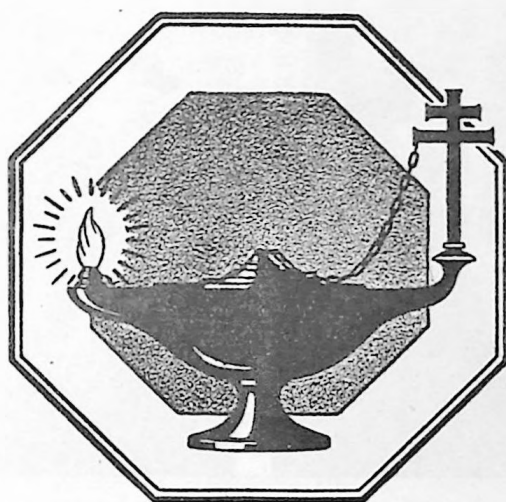


# TOC H JOURNAL



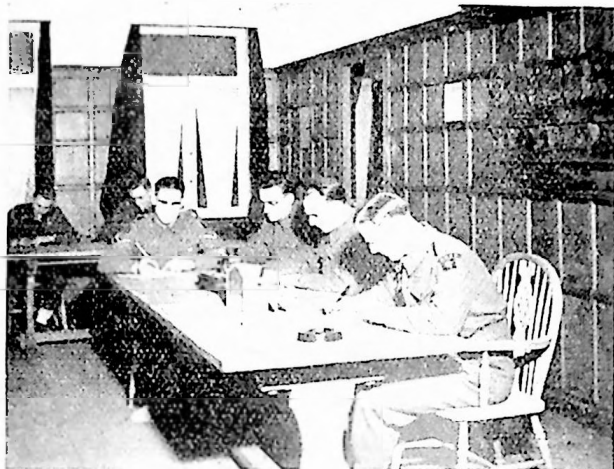
JANUARY—MCMXLV

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THREEPENCE



*Top Left : The Old House to-day; Top Right : Writing Home.  
 Middle Left : Tubby hangs an old Notice; Middle Right : Charles Young, Tubby, Paul Slessor,  
 Barkis and Shaun Herron at the Door.  
 Bottom Left : A quiet Corner of the Library; Bottom Right : A Cup of 'Char.'  
 (Photos : Current Affairs, Ltd.)*

# TOC H JOURNAL

VOL. XXIII

JANUARY, 1945

No. 1

## THE OLD HOUSE LIVES AGAIN

LUNCH in London—the big plane with its mixed bag of Service passengers—the misty map of a Southern county—the iron-grey Channel, flecked with white horses—the flat fields of France and Flanders, cut into a jig-saw by shining floods and streams and here and there pocked with white bomb craters—tea in a Toc H Leave Hostel in Brussels. So Paul Slessor and I returned again to Belgium. We were not mere tourists. We had a special 'mission'—to help restore the Old House.

After two days with Arthur Edgar and the Toc H team, British and Belgian, in the City, Paul Webb drove us to Poperinghe. A grey dawn flowered slowly, as we went, into the blue and gold of a day as beautiful as early Spring. As we entered one little town the name 'Toc H' came boldly into view and we were drinking 'elevenses' the next minute with Shaun Herron among the troops in a fine Club.

We rattled down the *pavé* road, on which all traffic bore, like our own car, the white star of the B.L.A. And soon we felt our pulses beat faster as we crossed the Ridge of Passchendaele and were suddenly among the old landmarks. On one hand the domes of Tynecot Cemetery, with their kneeling angels, in front of us the spires of Ypres. We slowed down before the Menin Gate, where we fancied the Lion, his headquarters blown away, looked more defiantly Eastwards than ever. Then we were on the most familiar last lap, through Vlamertinghe, past the Station, across the Grande Place of Pop, and at the door of the Old House itself. The big bell clanged, the great white door swung open and there was Charles Young welcoming us inside. Nothing seemed to have changed. It was like a dream.

### Friendship's Offering

There is so much to tell of a crowded fortnight. Only three things shall be told here. And first, a tribute to the friends of the House.

On July 13, 1941, the Germans requisitioned Talbot House, and gave our gallant stewards, René and Alida Bérat, twenty-four hours to leave. This was the signal that rallied all our friends in Poperinghe. Headed by Arthur Lahaye, Secretary of the *Association* which legally owns the House and, much more than that, the leader of the 'White Brigade,' the forces of resistance, in Poperinghe, our friends rallied round with every kind of transport they could muster and removed every stick of furniture, every book and picture, out of the House to hiding in their own homes. The Carpenter's Bench was carried with reverence from the Upper Room, the red hangings taken down and folded; a grizzled workman, now so busy restoring fittings, admits that they had a tough job getting the big harmonium down those precipitous stairs. Madame Lahaye carried home the Lamp and herself buried it in her garden. Next day the Germans entered and said "But where's the furniture?" They got the answer "You requisitioned the House, you didn't mention the furniture"—and they never got more.

This is not the place to tell the story of the White Brigade of Poperinghe. Sitting at the tea-table of one of them I watched him bring out of his cupboard, first our old albums of photographs so familiar to Toc H pilgrims, then the Communicants' Roll and 'Padres' Log,' then all our Communion Plate, carefully wrapped in chamois leather, with the receipt for every item signed by the Belgian quisling (now in prison) who had removed

it and been forced to bring it back. Then he produced a cardboard box, full of little packets of paper. Each packet contained a scrap of white silk parachute, generally singed black at the edge—and each piece of wrapping paper held a date and a record—"3 *Anglais sauvés*, 5 *Americains morts*." He, with the others, had risked his life to reach Allied airmen baled out near the town and, wherever humanly possible, to get them away before capture.

All over the town our friends hid our possessions, through search and threats of punishment. Day after day they listened to the B.B.C.; to be caught listening cost six months imprisonment for the first offence, then a year. For they were certain we should come back. René Bérat, already ill, died, they said, of a broken heart. He spoke again and again in hospital of the beloved House and of 'his garden' there. Every day, we were told, he turned his face towards the coast and asked when we were coming. On September 6 the liberators came, but René had died on February 28, keeping his watch as long as his strength lasted. Arthur Lahaye spent months in solitary confinement, and at another time slipped over the garden wall in his night clothes to lie in the fields as the Gestapo entered his front door. At least two young members of his Brigade were shot in the public street.

And they prepared for our coming by setting to work to learn our language—an exercise strongly discouraged by the occupying authority. Among the things our neighbours brought in and handed to me were four large cardboard boxes of books, borrowed from Talbot House bookcase. With them was a neat list headed 'English Library,' which lies beside me as I write. It contains the titles of 97 English books, including many poets from Chaucer to Browning, many volumes of history and essays and most of the 'classical' novelists of the 19th century. And I was shown also the text books of a four years' course in English literature which the class, using this library, had completed at much personal risk. So when we came they welcomed us proudly in our own tongue.

And after a meal with the delightful Lahaye family the six small children of the household came in and embraced us and then one by one stood up, with a little bow, and recited or sang their English 'piece,' beginning with "Twinkle, twinkle, little star" from the littlest boy.

One afternoon we held an Extraordinary General Meeting of the *Association de Talbot House*. Sitting in a circle in Arthur Lahaye's drawing room were fourteen of the most respected citizens of Poperinghe, mostly elderly men. In the place of honour sat Paul Slessor—"notre chère Président" they call him—who made a moving speech to them in French. The accounts were produced to the smallest detail, kept with meticulous care. And at intervals the door opened and we were refreshed by Madame Lahaye and the smiling little daughter Miranda, handing round a cup of tea, a glass of cognac, a variety of home-made cakes. The simple devotion of these men to our cause was a beautiful thing to share, their affection for their President touching. I hope I have the right to make a personal comment. Paul Slessor came into his kingdom when he re-entered Poperinghe and Ypres. People ran out of their shops as he passed to embrace him or burst into Talbot House when they heard he had arrived crying "*O mon ami, mon chère Majeur!*" In Ypres we were stopped in the street and greeted by officials as we stood under the Menin Gate to listen to the 'Last Post'; that night we supped in the house of one of our best friends there. Alida, grown an old woman in the war, stumbled, crying, into his arms when we reached her door in the Convent of the Sacré Cœur. This personal thread has run through all the waiting of the war years and through all the work our friends have done for the Old House.

#### Re-opening the House

There is not space for all the details of our ten happy days' work in Poperinghe. For nearly a fortnight before Charles Young had been clearing it up—for it was left in a filthy condition—with the help of a cheerful squad of women. All of these had been

chosen because of their loyalty or because their husbands were prisoners in Germany; the story of the 'collaborators' is a sad and tangled one, but we would have no truck with it. Our chief difficulty was one of water supply, for the Germans, by accident or design, had smashed the electric pumps which draw water from the deep artesian well which we sank in 1929 and which produces the best supply of pure water in the town. Re-opening the House was urgent, for troops—in what is optimistically called 'rest'—were tramping all day long past our closed door, with scarcely anywhere to go.

While the engineers wrestled with the pumps, Charles with the cleaning and Paul with the business of the *Association*, I spent two days restoring the Upper Room. Many things had to be collected and replaced, the curtains, on their heavy frame, to be rehung, the crown of candles to be repaired and re-assembled, the linen—all beautifully washed and returned to us in folds of tissue paper—to be put away. At last the Room stood complete in every detail, the perfect picture which is in the mind's eye of Toc H all over the world.

Next morning we opened the big doors at 10 a.m. and did not close them till twelve hours later. The troops streamed in for tea and biscuits on the ground floor as in 1915. The piano awoke to constant music. Upstairs in no less than five rooms men sat all day long writing letters home, reading or chatting by the stove. One fact which struck us all at first was the immense interest which these men, who had fought across the African deserts and lately come out of the watery hell of Holland, displayed in the story of the Old House and every relic of the old-fashioned war in which their fathers fought. To put up one of the old notices was to attract a small crowd and many questions, and in the library bound volumes of the *Illustrated London News* of 1914-18 were on men's laps, scarcely ever on the shelves. Many officers, from the Brigadier downwards, and men of all ranks and services climbed to the Upper Room. An R.A.F. party had got leave from their officer to park their lorry

in the Square for ten minutes specially in order to visit it. The Old House had come alive again, and in the faith and friendship of its familiar rooms the armies of the past and present had joined hands.

On that first morning a Toc H padre, now a serving Chaplain, celebrated Holy Communion for his own men at the Carpenter's Bench. It held a special meaning for them, for an hour later he was to leave them for England and another posting. As he recorded the date and his name in the 'Padre's Log,' I turned back a page to read the last record. It was in Rex Calkin's handwriting and showed that he and Hugh Pilcher and Bonham Carter had said their prayers here together on May 20, 1940, the morning of the day they were taken prisoner.

### The World Chain of Light

It was not without forethought that our visit covered the birthday of the Old House and the World Chain of Light on December 11-12. We had no clear idea beforehand what the conditions in the House would be and arranged, for safety's sake, that the Lamp should be lit at St. Stephen's Services Club in London (as indeed it has been lit every night for over four years) and the customary twenty-four hour vigil kept in the Chapel there by a rota of members. We hoped that at least a small party would be able to assemble in Talbot House and especially that Tubby would be there.

All these things came true, "according to plan." The party began, to gather in Poperinghe during the afternoon and at 5 p.m., as we sat at tea with our excellent neighbours, Madame and Marcel Derynck, next door, the news flew in that Tubby had set foot in Talbot House. What a welcome home was his! That night the resources of our little mess-room on the first floor and of our bedding (one thing the Germans *had* raided) were taxed to the utmost. Among the welcome guests were two padres, with their drivers (one was a member of Toc H in West Vancouver, the other a Chaplain from some distance) and Cpl. Josten of the Czech Army, who joined Toc H at Seaton, Devon. Josten



brought with him a gift to the House, sent from England by his wife—a fat church candle, a treasure otherwise unobtainable. This was destined to play an unexpected rôle at our Festival of Light.

As the hour drew on many other guests began to climb the stairs—senior staff officers and juniors, soldiers of all ranks, some from outside, some from the canteen downstairs. Half a hundred stood round the Lamp in its accustomed place on the panelled landing as I explained, at Tubby's request, the meaning of the ceremony of 'Light' and of the act of world friendship we were about to perform. Then, headed by the Lamp, we climbed the last steep flight into the Upper Room, already lit by the crown of a dozen candles hanging from the central beam and Josten's fat candle, stuck in one of the tall carved candle-sticks. According to old custom, which dates from 1915 when the Chapel floor had been weakened by a shell, the company lined up round the edge of the carpets which cover all the central area.

Everyone stood motionless and silent; the only sound was the rumbling of armoured vehicles in the street outside. Then came the Westminster chimes of nine o'clock, struck on the old Chapel gongs by Charlie Young on the landing below. As they began to sound I extinguished all the candles in turn; as they ended Paul Slessor stepped forward with the word "Light!" and kindled the Lamp of Maintenance. In a slow, loud voice Tubby said the words of Remembrance and Self-dedication and we made our responses. At this point the flame of the Lamp sank and died—fresh oil and a new wick did not suffice to counter its long sojourn under ground. And so Josten's big church candle, with the light transferred, took up the Chain; it was still burning steadily when we left Poperinghe next day. Let no superstitious member, if such there be among us, perceive any ill-omen in this. Let him rather, if he will, find in it a new symbol of the future—a token of the light of Toc H taken up not only in Czechoslovakia but among other nations of men in a new brotherhood.

What followed moved everyone present.

Let it be told in the words which a young soldier, P. H. Carlow, not yet a member of Toc H, wrote that night and gave into my hand next morning:

"Tubby Clayton spoke. It was of the House and the things so lovingly given to it that he talked first—of how, as he entered tonight, after so long an absence, he had felt the influence of the Carpenter's Bench, the altar. It was, he said, the most valuable piece of wood in the world, more precious than the altar of St. Paul's, for here so many men had made their last communion.

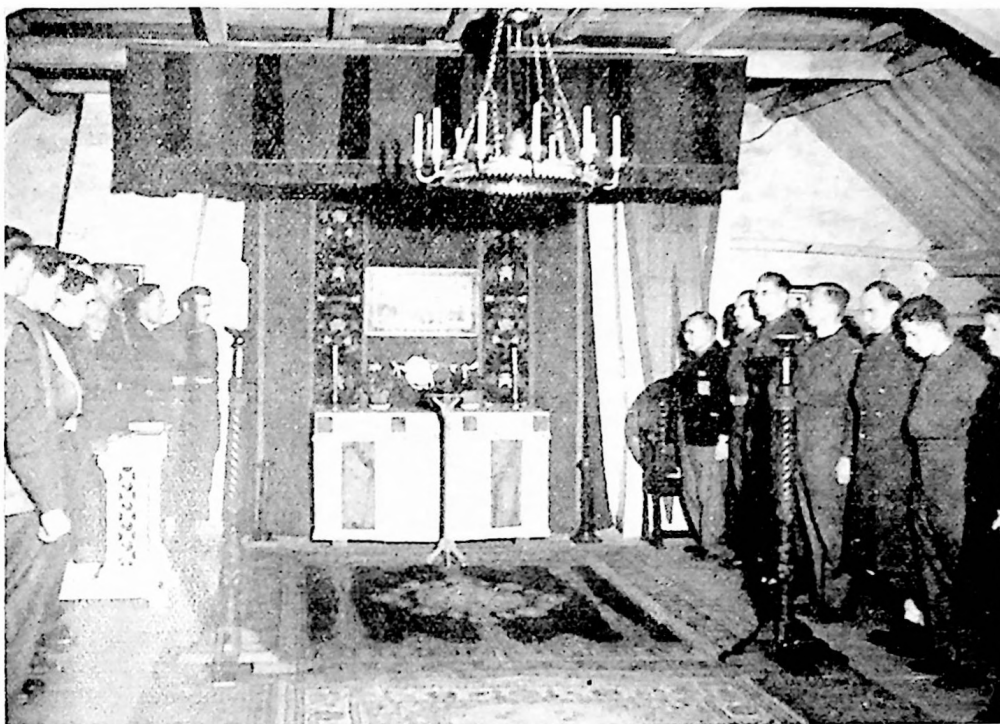
With this, he looked about him and it was clear that the flood of memories from each well-known object in the room was almost too much for him. With the passing seconds he recovered himself and pointed to Archie Forrest's chair. This Lance-corporal, he said, from the inspiration he had received in Talbot House, had brought many of his comrades in 'P' Special Company to Christ and there were many Branches round the world which were the direct result of this man's faith.

Tubby then spoke of the Elder Brethren and their struggle for right and freedom. He told us of the 4,500,000 who had marched by the House in the street below and of the quarter of a million who had passed through the mud of Flanders to the Light beyond. At this, he turned and walked about the room, saying as he did so that he felt tonight that the spirits of the absent Elders were gathered there. He said he remembered, nay, was reliving, the occasion when three West Indians, black as coal, had come here to be baptized. As witnesses Canadians sat on the Benches on one side of the room, Australians on the other. In the middle of the service there was a clattering on the floor below so loud that he stopped the ceremony. He had never been more surprised than to see six Chinese troop up the stairs, to complete, with men from home, a commonwealth of nations.

As he spoke we felt ourselves one in a communion of souls. Then we prayed. We prayed that the Elder Brethren might rest in peace. We prayed for their children and our own that they might grow up into a world without war. We remembered before God Neville Talbot, co-founder of Talbot House. We closed with the Toc H Prayer, so well known and loved. To finish all Tubby led us in two verses of the hymn 'Abide with me' and, kneeling, in the Lord's Prayer.

We began to leave the Upper Room. As each man made his way down Tubby shook hands and said a few words to him. He looked very, very happy to be back in the Old House once more, and said to all of us 'Thank you for coming—but for you I should have broken down. God bless you all.'

So, with tears in the eyes of some and peace in our hearts we left the Upper Room, feeling that the Grace of God had given the House to us and by the same power had restored it. It was now for us to uphold that trust by faith and fellowship with all men."



*The first link in the World Chain of Light is forged.*

Let me quote from another impression of that night, given in a letter home to 'Greeno' by Major Wallace Holland, a member in Northampton, Cambridge, Blackpool and Barrow-in-Furness:

"Twenty-four hours ago I was speeding over dark, cold and wet Flanders roads to keep the Festival . . . With me went my batman as driver. He had put off a 'date' to take me, but he knew little or nothing of the end of our journey, save what I told him as we went along. He is a lad to whom this world has not been over-kind and the treatment has left its traces of bitterness . . . I don't think he came empty away . . ."

We arrived about half-past seven and found the House much as I had seen it in 1931, with the added delight of it doing its job. The furnishings and memorials of other days have been nearly replaced—there's much of Barkis' careful hand in it all, and there he was, still busy with it, putting finishing touches here and there with a reverence the meaning of which you could not miss . . ." (He goes on to describe supper with us and the scene at the Chain of Light.)

"Well, there it is—December 11, 1944. Toc H remembers and resolves; looks back and sees the way to the future . . . Some men had trod on ground which for them the past had made sacred; some had discovered new things in the present; at least one still wondered about the future, about

an essence, a quality of which that night had brought one more glimpse, yet which seems more elusive as we that are left grow old—and the years condemn. What we all knew, I think, was that there still burned a Light leading along a way by which in the morning the world might find the sunrise. For as it encircles the world, as its beams broaden, shall come the dawn . . ."

\* \* \*

At 8 o'clock next morning Tubby celebrated in the Upper Room, after so long an interval, assisted by the two padres who had been our guests overnight. Soon after breakfast the troops began to stream into all the rooms below, and the Old House, wonderfully reborn, took up its day's work as it had first done nearly thirty years ago. And for a few days at least Tubby was back in his old workshop, in the Chaplain's Room, where all rank is abandoned, in all the other friendly corners, furnished to overflowing with guests on active service and in the Upper Room, where the Master Carpenter reigns again and fashions the souls of men in His old ways, ever new.

B.B.

## YOUNG WORLD—III. The Service of the Young Offender

*In this article of our series G. J. MORLEY JACOB, a member of our Central Executive, who is Assistant General Secretary of the Police Court Mission, sets out ways in which service can be given by Toc H members and others to the boy or girl who is 'in trouble.'*

IT may be that the less respectable of my readers will recall the verses of a comic song which dealt with the good little boy and the bad little boy, very much to the detriment of the former. Certainly there is something not altogether unattractive in many of the imps of naughtiness who find their way into the hands of the Police and thence before the Juvenile Courts, and a careful investigation into the individual history of the young offenders more often than not calls forth ready sympathy for the delinquent.

### Juvenile Courts

It should be remembered that the Juvenile Courts to-day deal with young folk under the age of seventeen who have committed offences or are in danger of doing so by reason of their being beyond the control of their parents, or as being in moral or physical danger from parents, or associates, who are themselves corrupt. Moreover, it should be noted that "every Court in dealing with a child or young person who is brought before it" is bound by the Statute to "have regard to the welfare of the child or young person and shall in a proper case take steps for removing him from undesirable surroundings, and for securing that proper provision is made for his education and training."\*

There are those who will ask why there is this personal sentimental attachment to, and this official emphasis upon, the welfare of the actually or the potentially delinquent child? I cannot attempt in the space available to provide a full answer, but suggest that with few exceptions children labelled delinquent are children who have been deprived or handicapped by friction and unhappiness within their family circle. The "broken home" is the most significant single factor in the production of juvenile delinquency.† If this view—and it is widely held—can be

accepted, the service of the handicapped and unhappy child will be recognised for what it is, a work of love, calling for the highest qualities of character and personal dedication in those who take it up. There must also be in candidates for this work a readiness to receive theoretical and practical training, since goodwill and fine intentions alone are insufficient for the job. In the past Toc H has provided many worthy workers in this field and as the future holds the promise of still more opportunities to serve handicapped youth, a reference to various means of service may not come amiss.

*Juvenile Court Magistrates:* Magistrates, or Justices of the Peace (the terms are synonymous) are appointed by the Crown on the advice of the Lord Chancellor, following the recommendations of Advisory Committees set up in Counties under the Chairmanship of the Lords Lieutenant. Save in London, where the appointment is made by the Home Secretary, Magistrates are required to appoint from their number those most qualified for dealing with juveniles to serve on the Juvenile Court Panel. This surely means that Magistrates, who are to sit in Juvenile Courts, should be only those men and women who have an abounding love and understanding of children and a personal knowledge of the conditions from which the children come. Unfortunately, there are still Magistrates sitting in Juvenile Courts who, by reason of age, temperament and other circumstances, are in no sense qualified for juvenile work, but each year sees a decline in their number and provides hopeful opportunities for better appointments, among which may be some members of Toc H.

### Probation

*Probation Officers:* The Probation Service in this country derives its origin and its in-

\* Section 44 (1) of the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933.

† See *Young Offenders*, by A. M. Carr-Saunders, H. Mannheim and E. C. Rhodes.



spiration from the pioneer efforts of the early Police Court Missionaries. It is now an expanding public service, which requires a constant influx of men and women with a sense of vocation and a sound knowledge of personal social work. Admission is normally through the Probation Training Board of the Home Office and would-be candidates between the ages of 21 and 35 should write for information to the Secretary of the Board at The Home Office, 49-53, Princes Gate, S.W.7. The course of training during war-time is severely curtailed, but when the war is over the period of training will be extended and may include a University Course in some cases. Trainees receive remuneration during their training and their tuition fees are paid by the Home Office.

The work of a Probation Officer in a Juvenile Court is concerned first with providing the Magistrates with information regarding the home surroundings, school record, health and character of the child or young person against whom information has been proved, so that the Magistrates may be capable of deciding what treatment to order in the best interests of the child. If Probation is ordered, the Probation Officer is then required "to advise, assist and befriend" the probationer for the duration of the Order.

These two short references to part of the duty of a Probation Officer will indicate the need for special training. An understanding of the methods of Family case work, and a knowledge of a variety of social agencies, including Child Guidance Clinics, is indispensable.

#### Foster Parents

*Foster Parents:* Of the various forms of treatment which the Juvenile Court may order, Probation is usually reserved for the juvenile who can continue to live at home. Sometimes, however, the home is so bad that the Court orders the child to be boarded out in a foster-home. There are never sufficient numbers of married couples ready to accept the responsibility of receiving into their own homes as members of the family, children who badly need the love and care which is

the right of every child. Probation Officers and Education Officers are ever ready to receive offers of help from those willing to become foster-parents in this way.

#### Approved Schools

*Approved Schools Staff:* Approved Schools or "Home Office Schools," as they are sometimes called, are provided for juveniles who require residential training. The schools are managed by local education authorities or by voluntary bodies and the appointment of staff is a responsibility of the Managers of each School. Not only certificated teachers but also qualified trade instructors who are good craftsmen, competent to teach such subjects as woodwork, metal work, building, horticulture are required.

At present there is not in operation any scheme of training or testing for candidates for this Service, but in due course such a scheme may be possible.

The supervision of children and young persons after they have left an Approved School is a concern of the Managers, but recently a scheme of "after care" has been started dependent upon Welfare Officers appointed by the Home Office. Enquiries as to these appointments should be made to the Chief Inspector, Children's Branch, Home Office, at the same address as the Probation Training Board (49-53, Princes Gate, S.W.7).

#### Borstal

*Borstal Staff:* Readers of the *Toc H Journal* are familiar with the Borstal System and the excellent work done in H.M. Borstal Institutions and by the Borstal Association, for young offenders between the ages of sixteen and twenty-three at the date of their committal. The Borstal Institutions are provided and maintained by the Prison Commission, who are always on the look-out for suitable candidates for Housemasters or for Officers for the discipline staff. Housemasters need not necessarily be qualified teachers. The address of the Prison Commission is: Kensington Mansions, Trebovir Road, London, S.W.5.

The Borstal Association is responsible for the second part of Borstal training, namely,

that period of after-care when a man has left an Institution and is being helped back into civilian life. "Associates," as those who befriend the "discharges" are called, are sometimes Probation Officers, but sometimes part-time volunteers. At present a large number of men discharged from Borstal go at once into the armed Forces where their supervision does not present much of a problem, but in peace time the Director of the Borstal Association (131, Victoria Street, S.W.1) is glad to receive offers of assistance from men who are ready to befriend ex-Borstal lads living in their district.

#### Further Information

*Other means of help:* In addition to the forms of service referred to above there are openings from time to time on the staff of Remand Homes and Probation Homes and Hostels. Moreover, there are often oppor-

tunities for voluntary help to be given to Probation Officers to Approved Schools, and to other residential establishments.

*Further information:* There may be some who feel they might be able to offer help in this work for young offenders if only they knew a little more about it. There are many excellent books on various aspects of the subject and in particular these are suggested as a beginning: Hayward & Wright's *Office of Magistrate*; John Watson's *The Child and the Magistrate*; *The Handbook of Probation* (National Association of Probation Officers); Dr. Cyril Burt's *The Young Delinquent* and Dr. Aichorn's *Wayward Youth*.

Finally, the Toc H Youth Service Committee may be able to arrange for enquiries to be answered, in person or by letter, by Toc H members who have some experience of this branch of personal service. Write to Alec Churcher at H.Q. G.J.M.J.

## ESPECIALLY THE LEPERS

THE Gospel says so, with no uncertainty. Here is an acid test for Europeans who say they regard Christ with reverence. Our Lord is not deceived by adulation. He is supremely Man, and lap-dog Christianity is not to His taste. "Have you helped Lepers, as I told you to?": that is a Judgment question each must face.

Toc H is now committed corporately to supply Volunteers in adequate numbers and of first-rate calibre to BELRA for preliminary training in a leper colony before undertaking the solid strain of the remedial system now yielding great results in such colonies. Finance is also a necessity; but Toc H is not here solely responsible. It could not be. We face a post-war period of shortage of finance for many needs. A wide appeal is to be made next year for Leprosy Relief. That will be backed by many far beyond Toc H—that's only right and fair. But we have promised on your behalf that Toc H will not fail to supply Volunteers, both men and women, for training with this work ahead of them. The BELRA Council require an increasing number of candidates year after year. And many, willing to offer themselves, will be inevitably rejected on grounds of imperfection.

in their health. You must be constitutionally strong to stand the strain. Otherwise, don't apply. Produce a doctor's health certificate, and be prepared for five years overseas, with only one leave home. What about pay? You will not save. You will not starve. You will not touch your own small capital. You will be happier than you've ever been. The problems of post-war will not affect you. You will have made your choice, to do Christ's will. Pray about this. Agonise over it. Then, when you know the truth which makes you free, write in to Alec Churcher, who will pass your full particulars from Toc H Headquarters to the BELRA authorities.

We are responsible for the supply of Volunteers. Remember that, you men and women of Toc H to-day. It's a stern issue. What is your reply? TUBBY.

#### Movements of Leprosy Lay Workers

Fred Tuck has gone back, after leave, to Nigeria. Jack Sowden, who has been working at Lui, S. Sudan, for five years, has been appointed to take charge of leprosy work under the Swaziland Government at Mbabane, and is now on his way there. Norman Crayford, from Uzuakoli, Nigeria, is to succeed him at Lui.

## LONDON LEAVE

NORMAN CRAYFORD and his wife, who work as *Toc H* volunteers with the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association, have been on leave from West Africa. Here he tells of a '*Toc H* job' he found to fill his spare time.

It has always been my contention that *Toc H* jobs are as plentiful as blackberries in Autumn, provided one looks for them, and does not always leave it to the Jobmaster.

Arriving in Scotland a few days before D-Day, my wife and I made our way towards London, in a leisurely manner, stopping to visit various folk *en route*, by which time the Flying Bomb attacks were fully under way. People were advised to keep out of London. We were not anxious to go, but eventually, leaving my wife with friends, I went on, as it was essential for me to report.

I had not experienced the Flying Bomb, and it took a very short while for me to decide that, for the present, elsewhere than London was the best place for anyone who could keep out. So, until almost the end of the Flying Bomb incident, my wife, a member of the Women's Section, remained away from the City, in a town where she very usefully passed the time in a Y.W.C.A. Centre, a place where her past experience was of considerable service to a staff in need of a rest.

LOOK out, here she comes! The recognised sound of a flying bomb came nearer. Our bus driver drew up, and those of us on the top deck looked at each other a bit startled, and vaguely began to duck a little for shelter from the glass. I, eager to see London again, was on a front seat. The bomb quickly came, passed over, and crashed a few hundred yards away. The bus moved on, the passengers heaved sighs of relief and endeavoured to see the smother going up. A minute or two later we were again halted, unable to proceed because the debris had closed the road. It was not my intention to go back, so I decided to walk on to my destination. Already the dust and smoke from the bomb had begun to disappear, and the place was alive with A.R.P. and other helpers.

Some few minutes walk farther on I came to the scene of an old flying bomb incident, and, at the same moment, the sound of another 'packet' coming over made itself heard. Like other passers-by I looked to see the direction of its passing, and sought cover. Then I saw the bomb some way over as it began to cut out and, at great speed, make for the ground. From the slight rise

where I was I actually saw it land. A sharp heavy thud, a huge column of smoke and dust, and I knew in that short moment another group of London homes were battered and destroyed. It seemed to me that this was a hot spot.

A little later I found myself skirting this latest incident, and in passing a row of houses, affected by the blast, I saw outside one house a white terrier tied to the railing, and a very old lady weeping on the step. Naturally I stopped to hear her story. She took me into the house to view the mess, and mess it was, although not nearly so bad as those nearer the centre of the damage area. She shared the house with another elderly woman, who later came along, having run with her personal effects elsewhere, after the explosion.

Poor old souls! Just on their own. The plaster was off the ceilings, door and window frames out, the whole house full of dust and rubble; all this only a couple of days after they had had to clean up from an incident some distance away. I helped cover up various things, consoled the old couple, and went off for some A.R.P. assistance for them. All the A.R.P. men were fully occupied, so it was left to me to do what I could. Later a clergyman came along, in A.R.P. uniform, and said a car would take the women to a Rest Centre in a short while. Meanwhile we prepared to leave, lifting the front door back to its right place, filling bags with personal effects, etc. Then our friend, the parson, came back and said that those who could walk to the Centre should do so, and would I escort the old ladies?

We set off, after instructions, two old ladies, dogs on leads, myself loaded up with shopping bags and packages and trying to fit my pace to that of my friends. During this journey we took shelter twice as bombs passed over. The Rest Centre was in a school, about a mile away. The officials were already busy taking particulars from those

who had lost their homes, cheering up the shocked people—one lad there had lost both parents that morning—issuing tea (that great standby), looking after babies and a hundred and one other jobs. I explained my presence, gave particulars of my two old dames, kept them cheery and assured them that the authorities would protect their house and, most important apparently to them, they would not have to part from their dogs. One of Brother Douglas's 'Brown Brothers' was there, and I left them in his hands.

Two things stand out in my mind from that morning. When a bomb went over very low, whilst in the Centre, the children made a game of it and merely ducked under the table; the other was the fact that not so far away a Gospel Meeting continued during the whole affair.

By the time all this had taken place some hours had passed, but I did eventually reach my destination. This, my first experience of the flying bomb, left quite an impression on my mind. Here was I, in London, with nothing much to do; was there not some way in which I could lend a hand? It seemed to me from what I had seen that morning there was plenty to do on the outside of bombing incidents for such as myself.

A week passed; I was out of the City for some of that time; but the two old ladies never quite left my mind. Between keeping watch for the cooks at the Toc H House, which was my temporary home, sleeping in a cellar with a dozen other men, waking up at all hours, either to the sound of bombs coming, going, or exploding, plus dodging them (I was on the fourth floor in my bath once as an alert went, and managed to reach the ground floor as 'our friend' drew near enough to shake the house—it is not so funny to be caught on the top floor in one's birthday suit) the idea of lending a hand never quite left my mind, yet I was ignorant as to just how to go about it.

### The Hungerford Club

It happened that in passing down towards Charing Cross, I saw a Citizen's Advice Bureau. I went in and explained my visit

to a very understanding person. She advised me to go next door to the City of Westminster A.R.P. Offices. This I did, and was conveyed to the seventh floor, just as another alert was ended. I explained to the official there what I had experienced, and said that I felt something to do with shelters, or centres, or as a free-lance on the scene of incidents, was a job for me. He was most sympathetic and appreciative of my desire to help. His first suggestion was that I should help at the Hungerford Club.

On my way home, I called in at the Hungerford Club, which is to be found under the Arches at Charing Cross. The Club is run as a shelter for those who are considered unsuitable occupants of ordinary public shelters. In the main they are the outcasts who roam the Embankment, and for whom at one time the St. Martin's-in-the-Field crypt provided shelter. Now the crypt is a Services Club. The Hungerford Club is open to destitutes, no questions are asked. There are baths, and a canteen supplies food and drink. Those who are in charge are doing a grand job, one requiring courage and a stout stomach. After I had heard explanations of some of the duties of an assistant Warden, I decided that it was hardly fair to others with whom I lived to take on the job. De-lousing clothes and seeing that 'visitors' were clean, and the actual manual labour entailed in such a Centre seemed not quite the job I was looking for. My two old ladies were still in my mind's eye. Even so, I did visit the Club again on occasions and gave help in a small way. I feel sure that any Toc H member would be received in a most friendly manner by those in charge, should he be interested enough to visit the place.

### Station Porter

Another address given me by the Citizen's Advice Bureau had been the County Hall, for evacuation work. The next morning saw the beginning of my 'lending a Toc H hand' in the work of evacuating Londoners and Southern Counties people to safer areas. I had already seen the crowds of people at various stations, and had helped unofficially

to convey some luggage for a party of evacuation people.

Reporting myself to the official in charge of station work at County Hall, I was hardly in the room before I was off to Euston Station, with a very capable gentleman, for what proved to be the hardest three parts of a day's work I had done for many a long month. Arriving by Underground we found helpers struggling with loads of perambulators, suit cases, packages of all kinds, a great line of evacuees waiting their turn to enter the lift to reach the main line platforms. Mothers and children, groups of unescorted children, groups, large and small, from different districts. On occasions, they were going by different trains, and their luggage, therefore, needed to be kept separate.

That day we saw eight packed trains out. Sometimes parties arrived by bus outside the station, and had to be escorted to the platform set aside exclusively for evacuation. Sometimes these tended to get mixed up in parties arriving at the Underground entrance. Sometimes sections of both would be in danger of mixing in with the line of passengers for ordinary trains patiently waiting for tickets, the line having overflowed the Booking Hall on to the evacuation platform.

It went on like this for some time. In the main, one arrived at the station around nine, and remained until the last train was out. At first, the number of helpers was small, but it increased in time. Many, like myself, were unaccustomed to heavy carrying work; neither is the Underground built for the conveyance of baggage. Porters earn their pay! All baggage had to be man-handled from the length of the Underground platform, after unloading the train, up a flight of stairs and along the tunnel to the lift, loaded into the lift, from the lift to the end of a further double section of tunnel, up the stairs on to the trucks, and then loaded on to the train. It was not possible to get other than two-wheeled trucks to the Underground, due to stairs, but we managed. We were able to help many unofficial evacuees also, and more than one old couple got to their train, and a seat, by our unofficial help; it was all part of the job of

clearing London anyway.

Here again, two things come to my mind. The patience of the constable stationed on our platform, to keep it clear for us, and an old lady sitting in a corner while old dad got the tickets, their pet cat tied up in a sugar bag. She said they could not leave London without their cat. They were 'fortunate' in obtaining seats on a crowded 'ordinary'!

### Train Marshal

Some time later, beginning to feel the strain a little, I was given the opportunity of taking a train out as Train Marshal. My first trip was of medium distance, to Leicester, where I went as assistant Train Marshal in order to get my hand in. The Marshal in charge was a delightful person, full of tact, understanding and appreciation of the strain under which everyone travelled, not least the escorts, who were directly responsible for the parties. He is a born Toc H man, although, because of his particular church belief, he could never become a member. He is also now a personal friend of mine. Let us call him 'Old Nick.' He and I travelled the length of the train, about fifty times, gathering facts and figures, seeing everyone comfortable, answering such questions as, "Do we get refreshments?", "Where are we going?", "Will they be good to us?", and so forth. Many hoped they were going to the sea-side.

On arrival we handed over our charges, and here I might give a word of praise for the Leicester authorities. Each party was put upon a bus and taken to one of a number of Rest Centres throughout the City. There, after an excellent tea and rest, their personal particulars were taken, food ration cards corrected, financial problems, if any, dealt with; a pile of clothing for immediate necessity was to hand. After each family group had been inspected by the medical officer, they were taken, as a family, by private car, to one or other of the Warden's Posts in that area.

From the Post they were billeted in that immediate neighbourhood; in a very few hours the whole of the train load, with little exception, was in its new home. Later in the evening the whole of the escorts and people



in charge of the train from London met the Director of Education for an informal chat, and to discuss any point concerning the evacuation. Then we dispersed, and found our way to our various billets for the night; a good job well done—and were we tired!

After this excellent tuition, I went out on my own, my experience abroad, and in England, being considered sufficient authority. I was a bit nervous at first, but so were many others. I made a point of walking the whole length of the train as soon as we left London, to become personally acquainted with my 'family' of 600 or 800, my W.V.S. helpers, the party leaders and the escorts. They were also glad to become acquainted with the Marshal, as around him centred the smooth running or otherwise of the trip.

A talk with the W.V.S. ladies decided the time for the first issue of refreshments, and the best method. Some of these ladies were out for the first time, and glad of suggestions; others were old timers, and knew it all, which saved time and trouble. All the children, and mothers, were warned against such things as standing on seats, heads out of windows, touching doors, etc. All were told where to find me, and for the first hour or two there was little rest and no time to see where we were going—there were figures to collect and sort out, papers to fill in and prepare for the officials on the station at our destination. Then, after our arrival, several hours were spent to see everybody happy.

#### Journey's End

Actually, without exception, the local people were excellent, and every preparation made for the comfort of the evacuation. In some instances the whole of the train load went to one centre, and remained the night, or until all were billeted. In others they went to perhaps two or three centres. Usually a hot meal was prepared on the spot at the school; in one the people had to walk to a British Restaurant for it. Each place was different, but always efficient, and every effort was made to make the evacuees comfortable, not only because of the journey, but because of the strain through which they had gone by the direct loss of their homes. One or two had

been bombed out twice, and quite often parties had been forced to take shelter even at the time they were preparing to travel to the station, and on one occasion we learned that a party had suffered casualties as it was assembling at the evacuation point. Often because of the alert parties were late, or switched over to arrive from a different direction. Sometimes parties arrived, and not their baggage, but in general, thanks to organisation and great personal efforts on the part of everyone concerned, all arrived safely and were despatched to their destination.

During my working period there was no untoward event, and apart from a little anxiety, natural to such a responsibility, I had no cause for complaint. At one town the Mayor and officials of the Borough were there in person to welcome the train. At each destination arrangements were made to house the escorts for the night, or until those who wished had seen their charges billeted. These were occasionally Hostels, but often private billets, or one could go to some hotel. What a treat it was to sleep peacefully in a bed with sheets, upstairs, after nights in London, in a cellar, with fellow snorers, or late comers to the shelter during an alert, seeking help!

On one occasion, as ours was a semi-private shelter, I found myself out in the street during an alert, escorting a couple to a public deep shelter, dressed in my pyjamas and a jacket. On the way back I lost my way for a moment, and prayed for no doodles until I got below. How fortunate I was to have a safe shelter to go to! Often I thought of the thousands sleeping under the stairs or in indoor shelters in the thousands of small houses, which offered almost no protection from a ton of high explosive.

And so it went on until those who employed me, and my own reactions, told me it was time to take a rest. Then, feeling almost a slacker, I rejoined my wife, and we went North where we have since become better acquainted with the excellent people of that part. We are feeling better for sleeping well, and I am again putting on the few pounds weight I lost in London.

N.C.

## TOC H KEEPS GOING IN ATHENS

FROM Athens comes a heartening story from Signaman Leslie Goodyear, one of half-a-dozen members who take a hand with Toc H there in their limited spare time.

When the British forces arrived in Athens in mid-October the Greek nation was starving. Soldiers, naturally, were forbidden to buy food from civilian sources and their own rations at first were not too plentiful. The need for some sort of canteen was imperative—and Toc H was first in the field. Major Ellison took charge as Warden; Miss Crozier became Matron—and is acclaimed as the heroine of the piece. Her energy secured for Toc H the 'number one' café of Athens, with a large well-furnished hall and a balcony which, "by silent agreement of the customers themselves," became the reading, writing and quiet room. The café bakery, working night and day, produced enormous quantities of cakes from Army rations, and a body of 40 gallant Greek girls was recruited to serve.

On December 2 fighting broke out in Athens. The electric power in the town was cut off and the lights and ovens in Toc H went out of action. Lighting, thanks to the dynamo at Army H.Q., was restored that night, but what about the cakes? There was a small coal-burning range on the premises—but what about the coal? The coal was on Piraeus docks, with all the dockers on strike by order of ELAS—and the docks were seven miles away, on a road infested with snipers. The Matron took a truck and driver to Piraeus and came back with coal—though her indent *was* out of order.

"By this time the streets were unsafe for anyone . . . Street battles were raging round each of the police stations, and snipers were tucked away in houses where no-one could find them. The paratroopers and tank men were out fighting day

and night and were coming in very tired at all times and rolling up on our floor for an hour or two's sleep; dispatch riders and drivers were dropping in for a cup of tea every minute."

The Greek girls gave a fine example throughout. At the start of the trouble the Matron secured Army transport to take them home at night. As things grew worse some could not reach the Canteen and the rest had to 'stay put.' Miss Crozier 'won' 140 blankets for them within an hour, an average of two for the whole large staff, but the troops "took a dim view of this" and insisted on lending some of their own blankets—for floors are hard and Athens in winter is as cold as England.

Then rations began to give out. Four Sergeants ("angels, not very pretty") of the R.A.S.C., in gratitude for midnight tea after a long and dangerous run, volunteered to face the fierce battle on the road to the Ration Dump. In half an hour they were back. "Can't you get through?" "We've got it here," was the reply. And there were 500 loaves and enough flour and tinned food for a week.

Next, the bottom of the oven fell out, the fire-bars melted by overwork. A R.E.M.E. Sergeant-Major cropped up at midnight and patched it with his own hands. The coal supply again began to fail—and two Majors and a Captain drove through at hot corner, being fired on several times, to get fittings for an oil burner, which they rigged up themselves.

"I can't finish this story," writes Leslie Goodyear, "because it isn't finished yet . . . Meanwhile I would like everyone to know that in face of all difficulties the Light did not fail. Neither will it just so long as we have people like Miss Crozier and Major Ellison and girls like these in Athens to keep the flame burning."

### Wanted—Wardens !

Men are wanted *very urgently* who have the health, character and ability to act as Wardens of Toc H Services Clubs in the Far East, the Western Front, Italy and the Middle East. Applications of candidates, or names put forward by others, should be sent as soon as possible to the General Secretary, Toc H Headquarters, 47, Francis Street, London, S.W.1.

## THE ELDER BRETHREN

ALEXANDER.—Killed in action in North West Europe on September 25, STANLEY GEORGE ALEXANDER, Major, R.A.C., aged 34, a founder member of Tetbury Branch. Elected 28.11.'30.

BONHAM-CARTER.—Died on November 14 of wounds received in action on September 17, BASIL EDGAR BONHAM-CARTER, a member of Ilminster Group, only surviving son of Lt.-Col. Brian Bonham-Carter (Toc H staff, still a Prisoner of War). Elected 8.10.'40.

BROWN.—On active service in Italy on November 27, VINCENT CYRIL BROWN ('Brownie'), W/B.Q.M.S., R.A., aged 27, a member of Sawley Branch. Elected 11.9.'35.

CLAYTON.—On active service in June, 1944, WILLIAM ROBERT CLAYTON, R.A.F., a member of West Ham Branch. Elected 21.4.'37.

CROSS.—In November, EDGAR HENRY CROSS, aged 82, a member of Nottingham Branch.

GAMBLE.—On October 29, the Rev. CHARLES GAMBLE, aged 64, a founder member of Padiham Group. Elected 16.3.'34.

GARROD.—In a grenade accident on November 5, JOHN ROBERT ('Jackie') GARROD, Lieut., Home Guard, aged 42, a member of Whitstable Branch.

HARRIS.—Killed in action in October, SYDNEY H. HARRIS, Sergt., R.A.F., Treasurer of Tunstall Group. Elected 3.4.'35.

LOVELL.—On active service in North Africa on August 27, ALBERT HENRY LOVELL, a member of Exeter Branch. Elected 12.11.'31.

MALLINSON.—On active service in England on September 26, HENRY MALLINSON, Cpl., aged 29, a member of Huddersfield Branch. Elected 16.1.'36.

MYDDLETON.—Killed in action on August 20, EDDIE MYDDLETON, Sergt., Welsh Guards, a member of Holyhead Branch. Elected 1935.

MOUNTGARRET.—On November 13, ROBINIA VISCOUNTESS MOUNTGARRET, a beloved figure in Yorkshire and London, a Toc H Builder.

Oakey.—On October 22, RALPH WILLIAM Oakey, aged 25, Secretary of Nuneaton Branch. Elected 3.2.'39.

PALMER.—In a grenade accident on November 5, LEWIN ALFRED ('Peddler') PALMER, Lieut., Home Guard, aged 51, a member of Whitstable Branch.

RAYNOR.—Died of wounds in Normandy on June 30, ARTHUR EDWIN RAYNOR, a member of Hunstanton Branch. Elected 27.10.'43.

REYNOLDS.—On active service on September 15, JACK REYNOLDS, R.A.S.C., a member of Melton Mowbray Branch. Elected 18.4.'39.

SHEPPARD.—In October, the Rev. CHARLES A. SHEPPARD, aged 70, a member of Sowerby Bridge Group. Elected 1.1.'25.

SIMS.—Missing, believed killed in June, 1944, EDWARD SIMS, R.N.V.R., a member of Eltham Branch. Elected 21.6.'38.

SUTTON.—On September 12, after a long illness, ALBERT E. SUTTON, formerly Secretary of Melton Mowbray Branch. Elected 11.7.'33.

TUDOR.—On September 30, HAROLD PARK TUDOR, a member of the General Branch, formerly Warden of Gladstone House, Liverpool.

WILLIAMS.—On December 12, after long illness, ELSE ELIZABETH WILLIAMS, wife of the Rev. Gilbert Williams. (*See notice below.*)

In Memoriam: Mrs. Gilbert Williams

Gilbert Williams' friends know that for four long years his beloved wife had been lying crippled with increasing paralysis. It had been a heavy time of strain and weariness for them both. For she longed to go and had to wait with great patience, and he could do so little to help her. At last, while Gilbert was engaged in the vigil of the Chain of Light at St. Stephen's, she passed peacefully. Many members, at home and overseas, will remember her with gratitude and thanksgiving, and none more than the men who came with their joys and their problems to the home in Bromley where Gilbert and 'Missus,' as they called her, kept open house with a beautiful hospitality to all comers. Her strong faith, her cheerfulness and understanding were always theirs to draw upon; she was a true friend to all, a mother in Toc H.